DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 096 SP 013 863

AUTHOR Seiferth, Berniece; Purcell, Thomas D.
TITLE Administrators' Criteria for Hiring Practices.
PUB DATE Feb 79
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Employer Attitudes; *Employment Interviews; *Employment Qualifications; *Job Applicants; *Teacher Employment; Teacher Supply and Demand

ABSTRACT

In this study school administrators were submitted a questionnaire to discover the characteristics, traits, or qualities in applicants for teaching positions that most influence their decisions on hiring. Recipients of the questionnaire were randomly selected to represent all geographic regions of the state. Results indicate that the job interview and the personal impression job candidates leave on potential employers are the most influential considerations in administrative hiring decisions. The methodology used in the survey is described in this report, and some results are presented in tabular form. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED177096

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Berniece Seiferth

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Administrators' Criteria for Hiring Practices

by Berniece Seiferth
Professor, SIU - Carbondale

Thomas D. Purcell
Associate Professor, SIU - Carbondale

Current predictions of teaching positions at the elementary and secondary levels suggest a shortage of positions extending well into the 1980's. This shortage of jobs is of constant and continuing concern to educators and students across the country as competition for jobs increases. The current research was undertaken to determine if there is a common set of criteria public school hiring officials utilize in judging applicants for teaching positions. Such information about hiring criteria could be valuable to new teachers as they seek positions in the public schools.

SP013863

REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE

A study was made by Baer and Brown (1978) to obtain information as to what school administrators value most highly within educational credentials when deciding on candidates to interview. Seventy-three elementary school principals returned their questionnaire, and the top three factors used by them to select interviewees for teaching positions were found to be Cooperating Teacher Recommendations, College Supervisor Recommendations and Subject Area Concentration.

A similar project was undertaken in Mississippi (Napier, 1975). In the Mississippi study, eleven factors were ranked by principals and superintendants according to the priority given in hiring new teachers. It was found that the effective use of written and oral English ranked first, and personal appearance was second. The survey suggests that in Mississippi, initial contacts by letter and the way the application forms and interviews were completed were more important than academic recommendations and records.

Another related study in this area was a survey in Wisconsin (Mortaloni, 1974) of public school administrators regarding several areas associated with teacher preparation programs. It was found that the factors considered most important in recruitment of teachers were the letters of reference by the cooperating teacher, college supervisor, and building principal, and the candidate's grade in student teaching.

Johnson (1976) conducted a survey of 104 administrators in Ohio to determine what administrators look for in teacher interviews

and found that a neat physical appearance, a favorable letter of recommendation from the applicant's cooperating teacher, and clearly stated professional goals were qualifications at the top of the list. Zanella (1977) did a similar study focusing on the job interview and offered the following suggestions to prospective teachers: Show enthusiasm, poise and knowledge and have good references.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

For the purpose of this study, an anonymous questionnaire consisting of 40 statements of characteristics, traits or qualities of student teachers was devised. The instrument then was sent to 200 superintendents and principals of elementary, junior high and secondary schools in the state of Illinois. These respondents were randomly selected to represent all geographic regions of the state. They were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Unfavorable through No Importance to Strongly Favorable. Ascertained from each administrator was the reported influence the item had on his/her hiring practices.

A total of 127 or 64% of the sample questioned returned the questionnaires. A total of 91% of those sampled were males. Their job situations and other descriptive information about the sample appear on Tables I thru IV.

TABLE I
Respondents' Positions

JOB DESCRIPTION	N	DEVIANT
Elementary Principals	63	49.6
Junior High Principals	21	16.5
Secondary Principals	15	11.8
Superintendents	26	20.5
K through 8 Principals	2	1.6
	127	100.0

TABLE II

SIZE OF ENROLLMENT IN THE SCHOOLS

ENROLLMENT	N OF SCHOOLS	PERCENT
Under 250	28	22.0
250-500	45	35.4
501-600	7	5.5
601-700	7	5.5
Over 700	40	31.5
	127	99.9

TABLE III

NUMBER OF TEACHERS HIRED BY ADMINISTRATORS

NUMBER OF TEACHERS HIRED	N	PERCENT
0-5	13	10.2
6-10	21	16.5
11-15	11	8.7
16-20	8	6.3
Over 20	74	58.3
	127	100.0

TABLE IV

HIGHEST DEGREES HELD BY ADMINISTRATORS

DEGREE	N	PERCENT
B.S.	1	.8
B.S. plus extra hours	4	3.1
Master's	85	66.9
Specialist	28	22.0
Ph.D.	9	7.1
	127	99.9

As can be seen above, a variety of situations and types of administrators are represented in the sample. Although the authors do not have independent data to evaluate the composition of the sample, it seem fairly representative of Illinois elementary and secondary education. Responses should reasonably reflect the current trends in administrative teacher hiring decisions in Illinois.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The administrative questionnaire itself consisted of a series of statements describing characteristics of job applicants for teaching positions. Administrators rated each statement on a 1 to 5 scale as to whether the characteristics would be considered as highly favorable, favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, unfavorable, or very unfavorable when considering a job applicant. It was possible with these data to rank each of the 40 characteristics according to the importance assigned by administrators by computing the mean rating of each statement. In addition, a factor analysis procedure was used to identify clusters of item characteristics.

In Table V and Table VI below are indicated the 10 statements with the highest average ratings and the 10 with the lowest average ratings.

TABLE V

Statements receiving the highest importance rating	Mean	Rank
Appears to be emotionally stable and mature	4.69	1
Mature and professional conduct during the job interview	4.67	2
Expresses him/herself with appropriate and adequate communication skills	4.56	3
Neat appearance at job interview	4.47	4
Highly favorable evaluation made by cooperating teacher	4.43	5
Has intentions of bettering him/herself professionally	4.37	6
An A or B grade earned in student teaching	4.27	7
Favorable comment in letters of recommendation	4.25	8
Appears to be in good health	4.21	9
Favorable recommendations from individuals I know	4.18	10

TABLE VI

Characteristics receiving the lowest importance rating

	Mean	Rank
Previous participation in music activities in high school or college	3.28	30.5
Previous participation in athletic teams in high school or college	3.28	30.5
Spouse who is permanently employed in the area	3.28	32
A resident of my school district	3.14	33
Graduate of Southern Illinois University	3.12	34
Married	3.11	35
Attendance at a university other than the one nearest my district	3.01	36
A member of a social or ethnic minority group	3.00	37
Female	2.98	38
A relative of a family in the community	2.93	39
A relative who is a member of my staff	2.51	40

Of special interest in Table V is the fact that 4 most important characteristics are those which represent judgment which would be based on a job interview. Others in the "top-10" list include evaluations of the candidate made by others (characteristics ranked 5, 7, 8, 10). Of the remaining 2, one is based on appearance (rank 9) and other on motivation (rank 6), which would probably be evaluated during a job interview.

Clearly, the impression job applicants make on others, especially in a job interview, is weighed heavily by those making hiring decisions.

Most of the characteristics in the least important list (Table VI) are related to personal characteristics or situations. Although none is uniformly rated as unfavorable (mean rating below 3.00) consideration of family associations receives the lowest ratings. Sex or minority group status is generally rated in the neutral category. Since the other characteristics tended to be rated in the favorable categories, they are generally considered only as less important than other factors rather than as unimportant.

As a secondary focus, the 40 items on the questionnaire were submitted to a principal axis factor analysis using a varimax orthogonal rotation to approximate simple structure. An iterative method was used to estimate communalities. (Nie, N.H. et. al, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Second Edition, 1975, McGraw Hill, pp. 468-514)

If one examines the specific items that load on each of the two factors, it is evident that the first factor is quite similar in character to the items identified in Table V. In fact, all 7 of the items loading higher than .50 on this factor were also among the 10 items rated by administrators as being of high importance. (See Table VIII) The factor analysis thus supports the thesis that the most influential considerations in hiring teachers are those associated with favorable impressions of the candidate, with strong emphasis on the job interview. In fact, the single item loading most highly (.73) on Factor A was, "Mature and professional conduct during the job interview." The largest bulk of variation among the 40 items seem accountable by this single factor.

Factor B is somewhat less well defined since only 4 items loaded over .50. Those 4 which best define Factor B, however, are all associated with community considerations, (See Table IX). Apparently, decision patterns of school administrators may be described by considering what weight they assign to community considerations. On the other hand, administrators did not as a group assign these considerations a high importance relative to other items since they were not among the top 10. The authors suspect that this factor possibly reflect the composition of the sample and may vary with school size. Schools included in the sample tended either to be small (57.4% less than 500) or large (31.5% over 700). If community considerations tend to be relatively important in small communities (and small schools) and relatively unimportant in large communities (and large schools),

then the sample composition could influence the results to produce a factor like Factor B. However, this is quite speculative and the authors do not have data to directly support such a hypothesis.

SUMMARY

In summary, the job interview and the personal impression job candidates leave on potential employers and others seem to be the most influential considerations in administrative hiring decisions. Of least importance are family ties in the community or school. Relatively less importance is assigned to a sizeable number of personal and situational matters such as sex, minority group status, marital status, etc. The results of this study substantiate the findings of many similar research studies done over the past few years.

1

TABLE VIII

ITEMS LOADING MORE THAN .50 ON FACTOR A

ITEM NUMBERS	ITEM	LOADING
39.	Mature and professional conduct during the job interview	.73
19.	Highly favorable evaluation made by cooperating teacher during student teaching	.68
36.	Expresses himself with appropriate and adequate communication skills	.67
17.	Favorable comment in letters of recommendation in file	.63
21.	Appears to be emotionally stable and mature	.61
13.	An A or B grade earned in student teaching	.57
40	Has intentions of bettering him/herself professionally	.54

TABLE IX

ITEMS LOADING MORE THAN .50 ON FACTOR B

ITEM NUMBERS	ITEM	LOADING
5.	Spouse who is permanently employed in the area	.60
14.	Probable favorable attitude of the school board toward applicant	.58
31.	Grew up in a community similar in type to my community or district	.57
37.	Did student teaching in town of similar size to mine	.52

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clifford,Gerald F.,"Criteria and Techniques in the Recruitment and Selection of Teachers". May 1975,ED 115 601;SP 009 670

Fuhr,Donald L.,"Selecting First-Year Teachers". NASSP Bulletin 61, Fall 1977,p.57-59

Haefner,James E.,"Race, Age,Sex, and Competence as Factors in Employer Selection of the Disadvantaged". Journal of Applied Psychology,Vol.62:199-202,April 1972.

Johnson,Bobby R.,"What Administrators Look for In Teacher Interviews". Phi Delta Kappan,58:283-4,November 1976.

Mortaloni , Ronald,"School Administrators Evaluate tne Letter of Reference and Selected Recruitment Practices".Resources in Education,ED 009 965,Vol.10,No.4-6.

Napier,Lee,"A Survey of Opinions of Mississippi School Administrators Regarding Factors Most Important in Hiring Teachers For Their First Teaching Position". Research Report Vol.5,No.8 Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. Bureau Of Education Materials and Research Nov.1975.

Rice,Marion,"The Application of Attribution Theory to Educational Evaluation". 1975,8p.Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington D.C. March 30-April 3,1975).

Schumann,Paul F.,"Questions an Administrator Should Ask".NASSP Bulletin 61 No.405,Jan.1977,p.62-65.

Zanella,Richard E.,"The Art of Interviewing".NASSP Bulletin 61 No.405,Jan.1977,p.06-69.